

ANNEXURE.

Letter dated 31st August, 1926, from V. Vedavyasacharya, Esq., B.A., Secretary to the Annachattram Committee, Bangalore, to C. Ranganatha Rao Sahib, Esq., B.A., B.L., Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

Adverting to Government Order No. 156-61—Muz. 89-23, dated 28th July 1926, I am directed, by the Committee therein appointed, to forward herewith, their Report on the Subject.

REPORT.

Terms of Reference.—In their Order No. 156-61—Muz. 89-23, dated 28th July 1926 after referring to (1) the unsatisfactory manner in which the system of giving free food at Annachattrams was actually working, and (2) the diminution in their usefulness owing to materially altered conditions, and briefly indicating some lines of activities of a more beneficial nature towards which the grants of these Chattrams could perhaps be usefully diverted, Government appointed the present Committee to go into the question and to make their recommendations in the matter. Though the terms of reference, as mentioned in the order above, somewhat restrict the scope of the recommendations to be made, yet we are inclined to think that we shall not be transgressing our limits, if we briefly review the origin and the history of Annachattrams and to offer our views on the need to continue, or to abolish, the several classes of these institutions, having regard, among other things, to their previous history and their present condition.

2. *The Origin of the Idea of Free Feeding.*—The system of free feeding in India is of ancient origin. It has all along been considered one of the most meritorious of acts to feed, or to give alms to, persons belonging to the sacerdotal classes. In days when there was more intimate and direct connection than at present between the State and Religion, free feeding institutions were the direct outcome of this spirit and the State sought to acquire merit and prosperity by establishing free feeding houses in important cities, in pilgrim centres, on pilgrim routes, in short, in all places, where travellers belonging mostly to the sacerdotal classes were likely to congregate in large numbers and would feel greatly inconvenienced, if there were not such facilities. It need not, however, be supposed that this system of free feeding was peculiar to India or to the Hindus. It will be found that analogous institutions existed, in similar circumstances in countries so far apart as China and Persia, Burma and Palestine and among communities so diverse as Christians and Buddhists, Jews and Mussalmans, at one time or another, during the course of their history.

3. *Annachattrams in the State.*—The Annachattrams in our own State have always been an important feature of the Muzrai Administration of the State from the beginning, though it would seem, that in the days of Dewan Purniah, they were established on a firm basis. The several institutions in the State, as well as those outside it, were organised by him on a comprehensive basis and liberal grants, with suitable establishments, were sanctioned to ensure their proper working right through the year. These Chattrams, perhaps, by reason of this, came to be known as Purniah's Chattrams.

4. *The present Annachattrams and the need for reconsidering their position.*—Since then, however, conditions have changed greatly and the Annachattrams have lost much of their usefulness. In the olden days, when travelling was difficult and had to be performed by easy stages, on foot or in bullock carts, these Chattrams served a very real and useful object, as halting places at convenient distances, where men and cattle could take rest after their day's journey, before resuming it the next day. With the spread of railway communications and other modes of rapid locomotion, the old routes and the Chattrams along such routes, ceased to be frequented by the travelling public. On the other hand, the grants to Chattrams have, most of them, come to be used up in meeting the establishment and Nehmi charges, and the balances, if any, which remained have hardly been sufficient to run the institutions throughout the month, even with the reduced number of travellers, owing to the abnormal rise in the prices of food-stuffs, since

the time the grants were originally fixed. Government recognising that these institutions had generally outgrown their usefulness, as a class, have, from time to time, abolished some and ordered the conversion of others into rest-houses, the latter being eventually handed over to the management of the District Boards concerned, with the consent of those bodies. Added to this, is the feeling of the general tax-payer of the present day, that, whatever may have been the reasons for starting these institutions in the days gone by, these reasons have practically ceased to exist now. The foregoing brief account will, we trust, have served to show the need for reconsidering the necessity for continuing this class of Muzrai Institutions.

5. *Classification of Chattrams.*—It has appeared to us that it would greatly facilitate the consideration of the question, if some classification of these institutions was attempted and in this view, the differentiation detailed below, has been made :—

The Chattrams may be broadly classified as—

- (1) Local.—i.e., those which are situated within the State; and
- (2) Foreign.—i.e., those which are situated outside the State.

6. *Charities outside the State.*—Taking up for consideration, the latter class of charities first, it will be seen that they comprise the institutions noted in the margin. Every one of these three institutions has a historic origin and has, so far as we have been able to trace out, associations of a deeply intimate and personal character, connected with the names of some of the illustrious ancestors of our gracious sovereign and ruler, His Highness the Maharaja.

7. 1. *Tirupati Charities.*—The date when the Tirupati Charities were started by the Mysore State is not exactly known, though it is seen that they are being maintained for the past one hundred years and more. Tirupati is the most important pilgrim centre for Hindus, south of the Vindhya, and is perhaps only next to Benares in fame, in the whole of India. Government have charities at the place involving an expenditure of about Rs. 20,000 per year. It is understood that the charities were extended and organised in the time of His Highness the late Maharaja Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar Bahadur.

8. 2. *Benares Chattram.*—The Mysore Maharaja's Chattram at Benares dates from the year 1822. It would appear, from the available documentary evidence, to have been established for the spiritual benefit of Mahamatosri Cheluvarajammanniavar, presumably the step-mother of His Highness the late Maharaja Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar Bahadur. Benares is still the chief centre of Hindu pilgrimage in India and all Hindu rulers of any consequence (almost without an exception) have been maintaining Anna-chattrams in the place, from their respective State funds from a long time.

9. *Barahazar Santarpane.*—The institution of the Barahazar Santarpane—or the feeding of 12,000 Brahmins—at Subrahmanya on the occasion of the Champa Shasti Festival, is of even more ancient origin. There are references to show that it has existed continuously, at least since the year 1801. In 1826, His Highness the late Maharaja Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar Bahadur visited the place and made costly gifts to the temple and His Highness the late Maharaja Chamarajendra Wodeyar Bahadur also visited the temple and made costly presents, including an elephant.

10. There is, therefore, considerable religious and personal sentiment attaching to these three institutions. There is also another point which we wish to emphasize in this connection. Any reduction in the grants to these institutions, or any measure which would tend to restrict or hamper their usefulness, is likely to create an unfavourable opinion in the Hindu World, particularly outside the State, besides helping to cast a reflection on the State. For these reasons, we are strongly of the opinion that it is neither advisable nor desirable to interfere with these three charities. We would even go further and recommend that, if possible, they be improved and made more efficient.

11. *Local Charities.*—As regards the local Annachattrams they may be roughly divided into two groups (1) those which are situated at pilgrim centres and (2) those which are situated on the recognised pilgrim routes.

12. At present, there are thirty-eight chattrams in the State, including the two private institutions in the Mysore District, noted in the margin, which are in receipt of Government Grants. The amount sanctioned to these Chattrams vary considerably as also the establishment and nehim charges, and, in consequence, the balances available for the feeding of travellers. In some Chattrams the travellers are fed; in others only raw rations are supplied, while in some others only sadavart is given to Bairagees.

13. *Chattrams on Pilgrim Routes.*—The most important pilgrim routes are those leading out of the State, to Tirupati, Udipi and Subrahmanya. In the case of Subrahmanya,

1. Paymaster Venkata Rao's Chattram at Lingarajpur, Mandya Taluk.
2. Juggulal Dharmasala, Mysore.

there is not a continuous volume of pilgrim traffic all the year round, justifying the continuance of Chattrams at Bisle or Saklespur. The concourse of pilgrims takes place only during a short season and there are feeding facilities at present (on payment) all along the route during that period. Between Shimoga and Udipi, there is a very convenient motor bus service; and feeding facilities, if any, needed on the way, are amply provided by hotels, almost at every halting place en route. Lastly, the Tirupati route is hardly used by pilgrims now, there being quite a number of convenient train services to Tirupati. List A appended to this Report shows the several places on the pilgrim routes, where Annachattrams are now situated. We have carefully considered the need for a Chattram in every one of these places; and for the reasons we have mentioned above, we have come to the conclusion that they may all be abolished, subject, however, to the observations made below, and that in the case of the two private Chattrams in the Mysore District, which are now in receipt of Government grants, the said grants may be discontinued.

14. *Government Annachattram at Bangalore.*—We now wish to refer in some detail to the utilisation of the funds which will become available by the abolition of the Government Chattram at Bangalore. The Bangalore Chattram was originally a Muzrai Institution, but owing to mismanagement in pre-Rendition days a sum of Rs. 800 (out of the cash grant of Rs. 1,563-5-0) was diverted in favour of Govindachetty's Chattram in the Civil and Military Station. After the historic Rendition of March 1881, this amount of Rs. 800 was given back to the Government Chattram in the City, in consideration of feeding a certain number of students belonging to the Sanskrit College at Bangalore. The Sri Chamarajendra Sanskrit College at Bangalore has been recently transferred to the control of the Education Department, the studies therein being remodelled on secular and general lines. At present the Muzrai grant of Rs. 800 made to the Annachattram at Bangalore, is distributed equally between the Veda Maha Pathasala and the Sri Chamarajendra Sanskrit College, Bangalore; that is, a certain number of students of each of these two institutions are being given one meal a day at the Chattram. It is within our knowledge that the food given there is indifferent and that the students lose much of their valuable time in going to the Chattram every day for their food and returning from it. We would therefore recommend that the sum of Rs. 800 which will become available by the abolition of this Chattram, be wholly and specifically given, for the award of suitable scholarships to the students of both the Veda Maha Pathasala and the Sri Chamarajendra Sanskrit College, Bangalore.

15. *Mysore Chattram.*—In the case of the Chattram at Mysore under the management of the Palace, we would respectfully venture to suggest that free feeding therein may be restricted to certain seasons or to special occasions like the Birthday of His Highness the Maharaja, the Dasara Festivities, etc.

16. *Chattrams at Pilgrim Centres.*—The Chattrams at pilgrim centres have also outgrown their usefulness. List B appended to this report shows the several pilgrim centres where Annachattrams are now situated. When pilgrims congregate at these centres, which happens only on special occasions, there is, usually, organised private charity on a large and generous scale. The better classes have their own facilities for feeding, while the others are fed, at the expense of private charity. In any event, there is no real need for maintaining Government Annachattrams at these pilgrim centres. We would, however, make an exception in the case of the Chattram on the Himavathgopalaswami Hill, as it is situated in an out of the way place, with absolutely no facilities of any kind, and is largely frequented by poor pilgrims (such as Bairagees, etc.) on their way to Rameswaram from Benares. The annual Government Grant is also relatively small, being only Rs. 118-8-0. It may be added that there are also sentimental associations connecting this place with the Ruling House of Mysore. For the reasons stated, we recommend that all the Chattrams included in List B be abolished, with the exception of the one on the Himavathgopalaswami Hill.

17. The effect of our recommendations will be to release a sum of about Rs. 27,000

* A. Government grants for Annachattrams	Rs.	27,900
(i) Deduct Government grant to Chattram on the Himavathgopalaswami Hill	118	
(ii) Deduct Muzrai grant to the Bangalore Annachattram (recommended specifically for the award of scholarships)	800	
Net amount available roughly	26,982	
Government grants for Rest Houses	5,124	
Total of A and B	32,106	

per annum as noted in the margin* for being diverted for other purposes. In this connection we would suggest that necessary action be immediately taken to hand over the Rest Houses (already ordered to be abolished) to the District Boards or to otherwise dispose of them, so that the savings of about Rs. 5,124 per annum as noted in the margin, may also become available for

being utilised for the purposes indicated later. We have not made any allowance in the

above estimate for the continuance of the nehimi charges that are now being incurred both in respect of Annachattrams and Rest Houses. It has come to our notice that the nehimi system, as it is administered at present, is not serving any useful purpose and that, in many instances, the present recipients are not deserving of the concession. The principles enunciated in Government Order, Camp No. 103 of 21st November 1884, in the matter of granting nehimis do not appear to have been kept in view with the result that it has led to grave abuses. We would, therefore, recommend the total abolition of nehimi charges as such. As we fear, however, that such a step may cause hardship in some of the really deserving cases which could be brought under the terms of the order above quoted, we are of opinion that every such case may be carefully examined and the necessary relief given from the provision which we have indicated below.

18. *Objects for which it may be used.*—Taking, in the circumstances stated, a round sum of Rs. 32,000 as the total amount available for disposal otherwise, we proceed to make the following recommendations:—

(i) Half the savings or roughly Rs. 16,000 may be granted for the encouragement and development of the indigenous systems of medicine, both Ayurvedic and Unani. We consider that this is one of the most desirable objects on which the savings may be usefully spent, for, the relief of human suffering is perhaps one of the—if not the—best forms of charity. We understand that a scheme for the starting of an Ayurvedic College with a Hospital attached to it, is under the consideration of Government and that a sum of Rs. 20,000 is required for meeting the expenditure, if it is opened during the current year.

(ii) The other half of the savings may be used for the following objects of general usefulness:—

- (a) To institutions, or for the relief of the Deaf, the Dumb and the Blind, especially when such unfortunates are helpless and left alone in the world.
- (b) To Homes, or for the relief, of the aged and the infirm, who have none on whom they can depend for maintenance and support.
- (c) Orphanages for the maintenance, education, and the setting up in life, of orphans, who are poor and have no other means of support.
- (d) Poor students studying in the Mysore University. Some portion of the savings may be spent in giving financial assistance to poor students of the University who have not sufficient means to stay in the College Hostels or in private hotels, if they are prepared to club together in batches and make such arrangements for their board and lodging, as may be acceptable to the University Authorities.

19. It is our view and recommendation that the above four forms of charity should be disbursed, irrespective of considerations of caste, creed, colour or community.

20. The Committee wish before closing this Report, to place on record, their high appreciation of the efficient help rendered to them by the Secretary, Mr. V. Vedavyasacharya, in their somewhat delicate task and of the hearty manner in which he co-operated in their work.

21. The Committee met twice, once for discussion and formulation of recommendations and another time for considering and passing the draft Report.